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A  
L E T T E R

FROM A DISTINGUISHED  
ENGLISH COMMONER,

TO A  
P E E R O F I R E L A N D.

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A Burke (Pittman &)  
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L E T T E R

FROM A DISTINGUISHED  
ENGLISH COMMONER,  
TO A  
PEER OF IRELAND,  
ON THE  
REPEAL OF A PART  
OF THE  
PENAL LAWS  
AGAINST THE IRISH CATHOLICS.

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## INTRODUCTION.

**T**HE following extract from Mr. Burke's Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, on the subject of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, dated Beaconsfield, January, 3rd 1792, will shew that the contents of these pages, though not originally intended for publication, contain the *deliberate* sentiments of their author.

"A letter of mine to Lord Kenmare, though not by my desire, and full of lesser mistakes, has been printed in Dublin; it was written ten or twelve years ago, at the time when I began the employment, which I have not yet finished, in favour of another distressed people, injured by those who have vanquished them, or stolen a dominion over them. It contained my sentiments then; you will see how far they accord with my sentiments now—*time has more and more confirmed me in them all*. The present circumstances fix them deeper in my mind\*."

With the view of ascertaining, as far as circumstances will now permit, what the "lesser mistakes" alluded to in this extract are; and whether any of them have, since the first publication of this letter, been rectified, I have compared the text of the following pages, which are a reprint of the original Dublin edition alluded to in the above extract, with the subsequent editions of Mr. M'Donnell, 50, Essex Street, Dublin, in

\* Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke—London, M'Lean, 1823, vol. vi. p. 369.

1791, and with vol. vi. pages 267 to 292 of the complete and elegant edition of Mr Burke's works by M'Lean, 26, Haymarket, 1823. I find that the texts of the three editions are all different; principally in the passages which occur in pages 8, 12, 19, and 21, of the following text. I have therefore subjoined to this introduction, a table of the various readings; and the reader will find, that with the exception of the passage in p. 8, l. 20, in which the two first editions are evidently most correct, the edition of 1823 is the most accurate in all probability. The passage in p. 19 of the following pages is evidently incorrect.

These observations are, I think, sufficient to elucidate the text of the following pages as far as typographical errors (and it is well known that Mr. Burke's manuscripts were frequently so much interlined as to have rendered such errors unavoidable,) are concerned. I add a word in explanation of the motives which induced me to undertake the task. I happened accidentally to meet with a collection of copies of the London edition of 1785; and thought that it would promote the object of the British Catholic Association, to take them from their dusty shelves and commit them to its care. The error however in p. 19 would not permit me to do this without further examination; and the result has been the comparison of the three editions.

The editor of the edition of 1791, prefaces the letter with the following advertisement: "The Editor hopes that this new publication of the following letter, will not be deemed unseasonable; as it is universally allowed to contain much useful

information on the present state of the Catholics of Ireland, a subject which it is expected, will be discussed in Parliament early in the next session."

I might almost repeat these words as my motive for wishing to attract public attention to this letter in 1824. But the reflecting reader will see, that like the gems of classical antiquity, it has increased in value by age. Since 1791 the sagacity of the observations of pages 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27, have been proved by the debates upon the Veto the protection which the Irish Catholics *have derived* from THE SHIELD of p. 11, against the sword, now I trust almost broken and edgeless, of Orange oppression, while the English Catholics deprived of that shield have in vain pleaded their blamelessness and exertions in their country's cause, has become manifest to all the world; that shield itself has protected the hopes of the friends of Ireland and of justice, and has become the head of Medusa to the foes of both—the grand truth, so important to Christianity, set forth in page 21, lines 17, 18, 19, and 20, and in 6th, 7th, and 8th lines of page 29, has been demonstrated by the experience of every succeeding year—and every session of Parliament, every meeting in Ireland, I might almost say every hour of our existence, if we could know what passes in it in any part of the United Empire, hastens with continually accelerated velocity the torrent of public opinion, which will verify the prophetic words of Mr. Burke in the close of his letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe.

"My opinion ever was (in which I heartily agreed with those that admired the old code) that



it was so constructed, that if there was once a breach in any essential part of it, the ruin of the whole, or nearly of the whole, was, at some time or other, a certainty."

So fully am I convinced myself of the existence of this inevitable necessity, not to be avoided by the most sagacious or most desperate efforts of those who may deprecate it ; nor by any imprudent measures of those who may too ardently desire it, that if I feel an anxiety on the subject, it is only that which is expressed, better than I can express it, in the following lines of Horace, regarding rather the individuals concerned than the cause itself.

Ut tibi si sit opus liquidi non amplius urnâ  
Vel cyatho, et dicas, magno de flumine mallem  
Quam ex hoc fonticulo tantumdem sumere: Eò fit  
Plenior ut si quos delectet copia justo,  
Cum ripâ simul avulsos ferat Aufidus acer.

*Hor. Sat. Lib. 1. Sat. 1.*

A principal object of the British Catholic Association seems to me to be, to avoid such a misfortune, without degenerating into indifference either upon our own concerns or upon those of our Irish Catholic brethren ; but, on the contrary, to promote both to the best of its discretion ; and in confiding to its distribution the copies which have fallen into my hands of Mr Burke's letter to Lord Kenmare, I flatter myself that I co-operate with it in the attainment of that object.

HUGH CHAS. CLIFFORD.

London, Oct. 23, 1824.



Ed. 1785.

Ed. 1825

## VARIANTES LECTIONES.

No date.

*Charles Street, London, Feb.  
21, 1782.*

p. 3. l. 7. G——r

l. 9. Br—gh—ll

l. 10. a proper

l. 13. gave the weight

p. 4. l. 8.—No note.

Gardiner

Braughall

the proper

had the weight

Note—The sketch of the bill sent to Mr. Burke along with the repeal of some acts re-affirmed many others in the penal code. It was altered afterwards, and the clauses re-affirming the incapacities left out; but they all still exist and are in full force.

made before

last line but one,  
made to try whe-  
ther

p. 5. l. 2. also by

l. 20. Your Lordship  
mentions, &c.

p. 7. l. 11, &c. even the low-  
est, &c. or from,  
&c. such Corpora-  
tions, &c. or soli-  
citor, &c. or, &c.  
&c. &c.

p. 8. l. 7. as governments  
formerly did

l. 10. which subsisted

l. 11. of those who

l. 12. their own pockets

l. 16. his family, when,  
&c.

thereby

this sentence and the follow-  
ing, as far as the word go-  
vernment, is omitted.

(even the lowest)—from—  
such a corporation—solic-  
itor.

(as governments formerly  
did)

which existed in such esta-  
blishments

of that government which  
its own coffers

his family but times alter,  
and the whole estate of go-  
vernment is from private  
contribution. When, &c.

Ed. 1785.

Ed. 1823.

p. 8. l. 20. from the public to the private fund indemnifies the families from whom it is taken, an equitable, &c.

from the private to the public and from the public again to the private fund the families from whom the revenue is taken are indemnified, and an equitable, &c.

N. B. this is also the version of 1791,—the correct version seems to be that of 1823 as far as “indemnifies,” and of 1782 afterwards.

last line but two, must be

may be

p. 10. l. 5. the Protestant  
l. 2 from bottom, among which, &c.  
civilized age

to the Protestant  
(among which, &c. civilized age)

p. 11. l. 4, from bottom, 1791.—Note. In a recent communication with the Right Honourable author he observes, that even in the present state of the country, there does not exist a well founded objection against the admission of Catholics to the right of suffrage in counties.

1782. p. 12. l. 21. in the case of others towards them.

1823. of the principles they use in their disputes with others to their disputes with their fellow subjects

N. B. The version of 1791 is rather different from both.  
p. 13. last line but four, the late Dr. Kelly

(the late Dr. Kelly)

p. 14. l. 10. orders then at home

orders at home

l. 19. abroad, who afterwards

abroad. These persons afterwards

p. 16. l. 3. education of

education (I suppose) of Note. It appears that Mr. Hutchinson meant this only as one of the means for their relief in point of education. and to foment are directly

l. 13. and foment

p. 17. last line but five, is directly

Ed. 1785.

Ed. 1823.

p. 18. l. 2. will be in his hands

l. 8. fallen into such universal contempt

p. 19. l. 13. so miserably provided and living, &c. are considered as an intolerable nuisance to their country instead of being thought, as I conceive them generally to be, of very great service to it

l. 22. life, and having

p. 20. l. 4. to say nothing, &c. annexed

l. 10. their morals, and their

l. 19. security of his admission

l. 23. if they should

p. 21. l. 9. Here it would be much more so, as in the case of the first it only requires to reject, in the other little for his purpose is to be acquired

p. 23. l. 12. hardship indeed

p. 25. l. 14. G—r

p. 26. l. 8. which of popish

l. 16. complainant against his

will be indeed in his hands

are universally fallen into such contempt.

miserably provided for, living, &c. have been prevented from becoming an intolerable nuisance to the country instead of being, as I conceive they generally are, a very great service to it

life. That religion having (to say nothing, &c. annexed)

the morals of the established clergy, and for their qualification of his admission to it

if the Catholic clergy should

To educate a Catholic Priest in a Protestant seminary would be much worse. The Protestant educated among Catholics has only something to reject, what he keeps may be useful. But a Catholic parish Priest, learns little for peculiar purpose and duty in a Protestant college

hardship

Gardiner

which of the popish

complained against by his



Ed. 1785.

Ed. 1823.

p. 28. l. 16. the other I conceive would follow as a matter of course

the other, of a religious toleration, I conceive would follow in a manner of course

l. 19. a spirit of last line, and who never saw a man by conforming

and a spirit of These persons never saw a man by converting

p. 29. l. 3. though they are dead

(though they are dead

l. 11. G——r

Gardiner

The other variations between the edition of 1791 and the two others are so unimportant that I have thought it unnecessary to notice them more particularly. In the instances here given the edition corresponds oftener with that of 1823, than with that of 1782.







A  
L E T T E R

FROM A

Distinguished ENGLISH COMMONER, &c.

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MY LORD,

I AM obliged to your lordship for your communication of the heads of Mr. G——r's bill. I had received it in an earlier stage of its progress from Mr. Br-gh-ll; and I am still in that gentleman's debt, as I have not made him a proper return for the favor he has done me. Business, to which I was more immediately called, and to which my sentiments gave the weight of one vote, occupied me every moment since I received his letter. This first morning, which I can call my own, I give with great chearfulness to the subject, on which your lordship has done me the honor of desiring my opinion. I have read the heads of

the bill, with the amendments. Your lordship is too well acquainted with men, and with affairs, to imagine that any true judgment can be formed on the value of a great measure of policy, from the perusal of a piece of paper. At present I am much in the dark, with regard to the state of the country, which the intended law is to be applied to. It is not easy for me to determine whether or no it was wise, for the sake of expunging the black letter of laws, which menacing as they were in the language, were every day fading into disuse, solemnly to re-affirm the principles, and to re-enact the provisions of a code of statutes, by which you are totally excluded from THE PRIVILEGES OF THE COMMONWEALTH, from the highest to the lowest, from the most material of the civil professions, from the army, and even from education, where alone, education is to be had. Whether this scheme of indulgence, grounded at once on contempt and jealousy, has a tendency gradually to produce something better and more liberal, I cannot tell, for want of having the actual map of the country. If this should be the case, it was right in you to accept it, such as it is. But if this should be one of the experiments, which have sometimes been made to try whether the temper of the nation was ripe for a real reformation, I think it may possibly have

ill

ill effects, by disposing the penal matter in a more systematic order, and also by fixing a permanent bar against any thing that is truly substantial. The whole merit or demerit of the measure depends upon the plans and dispositions of those by whom the act was made, concurring with the general temper of the protestants of Ireland, and their aptitude to admit in time of some part of that equality, without which you never can be FELLOW CITIZENS.—Of all this I am wholly ignorant. All my correspondence with men of public importance, in Ireland, has for some time totally ceased. On the first bill for the relief of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, I was, without any call of mine, consulted both on your side of the water and on this. On the present occasion, I have not heard a word from any man in office; and know as little of the intentions of the British government, as I know of the temper of the Irish parliament. Your lordship mentions that opposition is expected from the archbishop of C——ll. If I am rightly informed, he has obtained that high and lucrative office under the crown, by the credit of his uncle, Mr. E—, who has himself an high and tolerably profitable office under the king, and has been for many years constantly in such offices; and who, as I am told, looks to the peerage. Opposition, too, is hinted from other persons, who



hold great places and have multiplied great emoluments under government. I do not find that any opposition was made by the principal persons of the minority of the House of Commons, or that any is apprehended from them in the House of Lords. The whole of the difficulty seems to lie with the principal men in government under whose protection this bill is supposed to be brought in. This violent opposition and cordial support, coming from one and the same quarter, appears to me something MYSTERIOUS, and hinders me from being able to make any clear judgment of the merit of the present measure, as compared with the actual state of the country, and the general views of government, without which one can say nothing that may not be very erroneous.

To look at the bill, in the abstract, it is neither more or less than a renewed Act of UNIVERSAL, UNMITIGATED, INDISPENSABLE, EXCEPTION-LESS Disqualification.

ONE would imagine, that a bill, inflicting such a multitude of incapacities, had followed on the heels of a conquest, made by a very fierce enemy, under the impression of recent animosity and resentment. No man, on reading that bill, could imagine he was reading an act of amnesty and



and indulgence, following a recital of the good behaviour of those who are the objects of it ; which recital stood at the head of the bill, as it was first introduced : but, I suppose from its incongruity with the body of the piece, was afterwards omitted.—This I say on memory. It however still recites the oath, and that CATHOLICS ought to be considered as GOOD AND LOYAL SUBJECTS to his majesty, his crown and government : then follows an universal exclusion of those GOOD and LOYAL subjects from every, even the lowest office of trust and profit, or from any vote at an election ; from any privilege in a town corporate ; from being even a freeman of such corporations ; from serving on grand juries ; from a vote at a vestry ; from having a gun in his house, from being a barrister, attorney, Solicitor, or &c. &c. &c.

THIS has surely much more the air of a Table of Proscription, than an ACT OF GRACE. What must we suppose the laws, concerning those good subjects, to have been, of which this is a relaxation ? I know well that there is *a cant* current about the difference between an exclusion from employments, even to the most rigorous extent, and an exclusion from the natural benefits arising from a man's own industry. I allow, that under some circumstances, the difference is very material, in  
point

point of justice, and that there are considerations which may render it adviseable for a wise government to keep the leading parts of every branch of civil and military administration, in hands of the best trust: but a total exclusion from the common-wealth is a very different thing.— When a government subsists, as governments formerly did, on an estate of its own, with but few and inconsiderable revenues drawn from the subject, then the few offices which subsisted, were naturally at the disposal of those who paid the salaries out of their own pockets, and there an exclusive preference could hardly merit the name of proscription: almost the whole produce of a man's industry remained in his own purse to maintain his family. When a very great portion of the labour of individuals goes to the state, and is by the state again refunded to individuals thro' the medium of offices, and in this circuitous progress from the public to the private fund indemnifies the families from whom it is taken, an equitable balance between the government and the subject is established. But if a great body of the people who contribute to this state lottery, *are excluded from all the prizes*, the stopping the circulation with regard to them, must be a most cruel hardship, amounting in effect to being double and treble taxed, and will be felt as such to the very quick  
by

by all the families high and low of those hundreds of thousands, who are denied *their chance* in the returned fruits of their own industry. This is the thing meant by those who look on the public revenue only as *a spoil*; and will naturally wish to have as few as possible concerned in the division of the *booty*. If a state should be so unhappy as to think it cannot subsist without such a barbarous proscription, the persons so proscribed ought to be indemnified by the remission of a large part of their taxes, by an immunity from the offices of public burden, and by an exemption from being pressed into any military or naval service.

COMMON SENSE and common justice dictate this at least, as some sort of compensation for their slavery. How many families are incapable of existing, if the little offices of the revenue, and little military commissions are denied them? To deny them at home, and to make the happiness of acquiring some of them somewhere else, felony, or high treason, is *a piece of cruelty*, in which till very lately I did not suppose *this age* capable of persisting. Formerly a similarity of religion made a sort of country for a man in some quarter or other. A refugee for religion was a protected character. Now, the reception is cold indeed: and therefore as the asylum abroad is destroyed,

the



the hardship at home is doubled. This hardship is the more intolerable because the professions are shut up. The church is so of course. Much is to be said on that subject, in regard to them and the protestant dissenters. But that is a chapter by itself. I am sure I wish well to that church, and think it's ministers among the very best citizens of your country. However such as it is, a great walk in life is forbidden ground to seventeen hundred thousand of the inhabitants of Ireland. Why are they excluded from the law? Do not they expend money in their suits? Why may not they indemnify themselves, by profiting, in the persons of some, for the losses incurred by others? Why may not they have persons of confidence whom they may, if they please, employ in the agency of their affairs? The exclusion from the law, from grand juries, from sheriffships, and undersheriffships, as well as from freedom in any corporation, may subject them to dreadful hardships, as it may exclude them wholly from all that is beneficial, and expose them to all that is mischievous in a trial by jury. This was manifestly within my own observation, for I was three times in Ireland from the year 1760 to the year 1767, where I had sufficient means of information, concerning the inhuman proceedings, among which were many cruel murders, besides an infinity



finity of outrages and oppressions unknown before in a civilized age, which prevailed during that period in consequence of a pretended conspiracy among the roman catholics against the king's government. I could dilate upon the mischiefs that may happen, from those which have happened upon this head of disqualification, if it were at all necessary.

THE head of exclusion from votes for members of parliament is closely connected with the former. When you cast your eye on the statute book, you will see that no catholic, even in the ferocious act of queen Anne, was disabled from voting, on account of his religion; the only conditions required for that privilege, were the oaths of allegiance and abjuration—both relative to a civil concern. Parliament has since added another oath of the same kind: and yet an House of Commons adding to the securities of government in proportion as its danger is confessedly lessened, and professing both confidence and indulgence, takes away, in effect, the privilege left by *an act full of jealousy*, and professing persecution,

THE taking away of a vote is the taking away the SHIELD which the subject has, not only against the oppression of power, but that worst of all

all oppressions, the persecution of private society, and private manners. No candidate for parliamentary influence is obliged to the least attention towards them, either in cities or counties. On the contrary, if they should become obnoxious to any bigotted or malignant people amongst whom they live, it will become the interest of those who court popular favor, to use the numberless means which always reside in magistracy and influence, to oppress them. The proceedings in a certain county in Munster during the unfortunate period I have mentioned, read a strong lecture on the cruelty of depriving men of that SHIELD, on account of their speculative opinions. The protestants of Ireland feel well and naturally on the hardship of being bound by laws in the enacting of which they do not directly or indirectly vote. The bounds of these matters are nice, and hard to be settled in theory, and perhaps they have been pushed too far. But how they can avoid the necessary application in the case of others towards them, I know not.

It is true, the words of this act do not create a disability ; but they clearly and evidently suppose it. There are few catholic freeholders to take the benefit of the privilege, if they were permitted to partake it ; but the manner in which this very  
right

right in freeholders at large is defended, is not on the idea that they do really and truly represent the people ; but that all people being capable of obtaining freeholds, all those, who, by their industry and sobriety merit this privilege, have the means of arriving at votes. It is the same with the corporations.

THE laws against foreign education are clearly the very worst part of the old code. Besides your laity, you have the succession of about 4000 clergymen to provide for. These having no lucrative thing in prospect, are taken mostly out of the lower orders of the people. At home, they have no means whatsoever provided for their attaining a clerical education, or indeed any education at all. When I was in Paris, about seven years ago, I looked at every thing, and lived with every kind of people, as well as my time admitted. I saw there the Irish college of the Lombard, which seemed to me a very good place of education, under excellent orders and regulations, and under the government of a very prudent and learned man, the late Dr. Kelly. This college was possessed of an annual fixed revenue of more than a thousand pounds a year ; the greatest part of which had arisen from the legacies and benefactions of persons educated in that college, and who



had obtained promotions in France, from whence they made this grateful return. One in particular I remember, to the amount of ten thousand livres, annually, as it is recorded on the donor's monument in their chapel.

It has been the custom of poor persons in Ireland, to pick up such knowledge of the Latin tongue as under the general discouragements, and occasional pursuits of magistracy, they were able to acquire; and receiving orders then at home, were sent abroad to obtain a clerical education. By officiating in petty chaplainships, and performing, now and then, certain offices of religion for small gratuities, they received the means of maintaining themselves, until they were able to compleat their education. Through such difficulties and discouragements, many of them have arrived at a very considerable proficiency, so as to be marked and distinguished abroad, who afterwards, by being sunk in the most abject poverty, despised and ill-treated by the higher orders among protestants, and not much better esteemed or treated, even by the few persons of fortune of their own persuasion; and contracting the habits and ways of thinking of the poor and uneducated, among whom they were obliged to live, in a few years retained little or no traces of the talents and acquire-

acquirements, which distinguished them in the early period of their lives. Can we, with justice, cut them off from the use of places of education, founded, for the greater part, from the œconomy of poverty and exile, without providing something that is equivalent at home?

WHILST this restraint of foreign and domestic education was part of an horrible and impious system of servitude, the members were well fitted to the body. To render men patient, under a deprivation of all the rights of human nature, every thing which could give them a knowledge or feeling of those rights was rationally forbidden. To render humanity fit to be insulted, it was fit that it should be degraded. But when we profess to restore men to the capacity for property, it is equally irrational and unjust to deny them the power of improving their minds as well as their fortunes. Indeed, I have ever thought the prohibition of the means of improving our rational nature, to be the worst species of tyranny that the insolence and perverseness of mankind ever dared to exercise. This goes to all men, in all situations, to whom education can be denied.

YOUR lordship mentions a proposal which came from my friend the Provost, whose benevolence

and enlarged spirit I am perfectly convinced of; which is, the proposal of erecting a few fizerships in the college, for the education of roman catholic clergymen. He certainly meant it well; but, coming from such a man as he is, it is a strong instance of the danger of suffering any description of men to fall into entire contempt—The charities intended for them are not perceived to be fresh insults; and the true nature of their wants and necessities being unknown, remedies, wholly unsuitable to the nature of their complaint, are provided. *It is to feed a sick Gentoo with beef broth, and foment his wounds with brandy.* If the other parts of the university were open to them, as well on the foundation, as otherwise, the offering of fizerships would be a proportioned part of a *general* kindness. But when every thing *liberal* is with-held, and only that which is *servile* is permitted, it is easy to conceive upon what footing they must be in such a place.

MR. HUTCHINSON must well know the regard and honor I have for him; and therefore he cannot think my dissenting from him in this particular, arises from a disregard of his opinion: it only shews that I think he has *lived in Ireland*; to have any respect for the character and person of a popish priest *there*—oh! 'tis an *uphill-work* indeed!

But



But until we come to respect what stands in a respectable light with others, we are very deficient in the temper which qualifies us to make any laws and regulations about them. It even disqualifies us from being charitable to them with any effect or judgment.

WHEN we are to provide for the education of any body of men, we ought seriously to consider the particular functions they are to perform in life. A Roman catholic clergyman is the minister of a very ritual religion: and by his profession, subject to many restraints. His life is a life full of strict observances, and his duties, of a laborious nature towards himself, and of the highest possible trust towards others. The duty of confession alone is sufficient to set in the strongest light the necessity of his having an appropriated mode of education. The theological opinions and peculiar rites of one religion never can be properly taught in universities, founded for the purposes and on the principles of another, which in many points is directly opposite. If a roman catholic clergyman, intended for celibacy, and the function of confession, is not strictly bred in a seminary where these things are respected, inculcated, enforced *as sacred*, and not made the subject of derision and obloquy,

he will be ill fitted for the former, and the latter will be in his hands a terrible instrument indeed.

THERE is a great resemblance between the whole frame and constitution of the Greek and Latin churches. The secular clergy in the former, by being married, living under little restraint, and having no particular education suited to their function, are fallen into such universal contempt, that they are never permitted to aspire to the dignities of their own church. It is not held respectful to call them PAPAS, their true and ancient appellation, but those who wish to address them with civility, always call them HIERO-MONACHI. In consequence of this disrespect, which I venture to say, in such a church must be the consequence of a secular life, a very great degeneracy from reputable christian manners has taken place throughout that great body of the christian priesthood.

It was so with the Latin church, before the restraint on marriage. Even that restraint gave rise to the greatest disorders before the council of Trent, which together with the emulation raised, and the good examples given by the reformed churches, wherever they were in view of each other, has brought

brought on that happy amendment which we see in the Latin communion, both at home and abroad.

THE council of Trent has wisely introduced the discipline of seminaries, by which priests are not trusted for a clerical institution, even to the severe discipline of their colleges ; but after they pass through them, are frequently, if not always obliged to pass through peculiar methods, having their particular ritual functions in view. It is in a great measure owing to this, and similar methods used in foreign education, that the roman catholic clergy of Ireland, so miserably provided for, and living among low and ill-regulated people, without any discipline of sufficient force to secure good manners, are considered as an intolerable nuisance to their country, instead of being thought, as I conceive them generally to be, of very great service to it.

THE ministers of protestant churches require a different mode of education, more liberal and more fit for the ordinary intercourse of life, and having little hold on the minds of people by external ceremonies, extraordinary observances, or separate habits of living, they make up the deficiency by cultivating their minds with all kinds of ornamental learning, which the liberal provision  
made



in England and Ireland for the parochial clergy, and the comparative lightness of parochial duties enables the greater part of them, in some considerable degree, to accomplish; to say nothing of the ample church preferments, with little or no duties annexed.

THIS learning, which I believe to be pretty general, together with an higher situation, and more chastened by the opinion of mankind, forms a sufficient security for their morals, and their sustaining their clerical character with dignity. It is not necessary to observe, that all these things are however, collateral to their function, and that except in preaching, which may be and is supplied, and often best supplied, out of printed books, little else is necessary for a protestant minister, than to be able to read the English language; I mean for the exercise of his function, not to the security of his admission. But a popish parson in Ireland may do very well without any considerable classical erudition, or any proficiency in pure or mixed mathematics, or any knowledge of civil history. Even if they should possess those acquisitions, as at first, many of them do, they soon lose them in the painful course of professional and parochial duties: but they must have all the knowledge, and what is to them more important than the know-

knowledge, the discipline necessary to those duties. All modes of education, conducted by those whose minds are cast in another mould, as I may say, and whose original ways of thinking are formed upon the reverse pattern, must be to them not only useless, but mischievous. Just as I should suppose the education in a popish ecclesiastical seminary would be ill fitted for a protestant clergyman. Here it would be much more so ; as, in the case of the first, it only requires to reject : in the other, little for his purpose is to be acquired.

ALL this, my lord, I know very well, will pass for nothing with those who wish that the popish clergy should be *illiterate*, and in a situation to produce contempt and detestation. Their minds are wholly taken up with party squabbles, and I have neither leisure nor inclination to apply any part of what I have to say, to those who never think of religion, or of the commonwealth, in any other light, than as they tend to the prevalence of some faction in either. I speak on a supposition, that there is a disposition to take the state in the condition in which it is found, and to improve it in that state to the best advantage. Hitherto, the plan for the government of Ireland has been, to sacrifice the civil prosperity of the nation to its religious improvement. But if people in power  
there,

there, are at length come to entertain other ideas, they will consider the good order, decorum, virtue, and morality of every description of men among them, as of infinitely greater importance than the struggle, for it is nothing better, to change those descriptions by means which put to hazard, objects, which, in my poor opinion, are of more importance to religion and to the state, than all the polemical matter which has been agitated among men from the beginning of the world to this hour.

ON this idea, an education fitted to each order and division of men, such as they are found, will be thought an affair rather to be encouraged than discountenanced : and until institutions at home, suitable to the occasions and necessities of the people, and which are armed, as they are abroad, with authority to coerce the young men to be formed in them, by a strict and severe discipline, — the means they have, at present, of a cheap and effectual education in other countries, should not continue to be prohibited by penalties and modes of inquisition, not fit to be mentioned to ears that are organized to the chaste sounds of equity and justice. Before I had written thus far, I heard of a scheme of giving to the Castle the patronage of the presiding members of the catholic clergy. At first I could scarcely credit it : for I believe it is  
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the first time that the presentation of other people's alms has been desired in any country. If the state provides a suitable maintenance and temporality for those governing members, and clergy under them, I should think the project, however improper in other respects, to be by no means unjust. But to deprive a poor people, who maintain a second set of clergy, out of the miserable remains of what is left after taxing and tything—to deprive them of the disposition of their own charities among their own communion, would be, in my opinion, *an intolerable hardship indeed!*

NEVER were the members of one religious sect fit to appoint the pastors to another. Those who have no regard for their welfare, reputation, or internal quiet, will not appoint such as are proper. The Seraglio of Constantinople is as equitable as we are, whether catholics or protestants: and where their own sect is concerned, full as religious. But the sport which they make of the miserable dignities of the Greek church, the little factions of the HARAM, to which they make them subservient, the continual sale to which they expose and re-expose the same dignity, and by which they squeeze all the inferior orders of the clergy, is (for I have had particular means of being acquainted with it) nearly equal to all the other oppressions

oppressions together, exercised by mussulmen over the unhappy members of the Oriental church. It is a great deal to suppose that even the present Castle would nominate bishops for the roman church of Ireland with a religious regard for its welfare. Perhaps they cannot, perhaps they dare not do it.

BUT suppose them as well inclined, as I know that I am, to do them all kind of justice, I declare I would not, if it were in my power, take it on myself, I know I ought not to do it. I belong to another community, and it would be intolerable usurpation in me to affect such authority, where I conferred no benefit, or even if I did confer, as in some degree the Seraglio does, temporal advantages. But, allowing that the present Castle finds itself fit to administer the government of a church which they solemnly forswear, and forswear with very hard words and many *evil epithets*, and that as often as they qualify themselves for the power which is to give this very patronage, or to give any thing else that they desire ; yet they cannot insure themselves that a man like the late LORD CHESTERFIELD will not succeed to them. This man, while he was duping the credulity of papists with fine words in private, and commending their good behaviour during a rebellion in Great Britain, as it well de-

served

served to be commended and rewarded, was capable of urging penal laws against them in a speech from the throne, and stimulating with provocatives the wearied and half-exhausted bigotry of the then Parliament of Ireland. They set to work, but were at a loss what to do ; for they had already almost gone through every contrivance which could waste the vigour of their country : but, after much struggle, they produced *a child of their old age*, the shocking and unnatural act about marriages, which tended to finish the scheme for making the people not only two distinct parties for ever, but keeping them as two distinct species in the same land. Mr. G——r's humanity was shocked at it, as one of the worst parts of that truly barbarous system, if one could well settle the preference, where almost all the parts were outrages on the rights of humanity, and the law of nature.

SUPPOSE an atheist, playing the part of a bigot, should be in power again in that country, do you believe that he would faithfully and religiously administer the trust of appointing pastors to a church, which, wanting every other support, stands in tenfold need of ministers who will be dear to the people committed to their charge, and who will ex-



ercise a really paternal authority amongst them? But if the superior power was always in a disposition to dispense conscientiously, and like an upright trustee and guardian of these rights which he holds for those with whom he is at variance, has he the capacity and means of doing it? How can the Lord Lieutenant form the least judgment of their merits, so as to discern which of popish priests is fit to be made a bishop? It cannot be: *the idea is ridiculous!*—He will hand them over to Lords Lieutenant of counties, justices of the peace, and other persons, who, for the purpose of *vexing* and turning to derision this miserable people, will pick out the worst and most obnoxious they can find amongst the clergy, to set over the rest. Whoever is complainant against his brother, will be considered as persecuted: whoever is censured by his superior, will be looked upon as oppressed: whoever is careless in his opinions, and loose in his morals, will be called *a liberal man*, and will be supposed to have incurred hatred, because he was not a bigot. Informers, tale-bearers, perverse and obstinate men, flatterers, who turn their back upon their flock, and court the protestant gentlemen of the country, will be THE OBJECTS OF PREFERMENT; and then I run no risk in foretelling, that whatever order, quiet, and morality  
you

you have in the country, will be lost. A popish clergy, who are not restrained by the most austere subordination, will become a nuisance, a real public grievance of the heaviest kind, in any country that entertains them: and instead of the great benefit which Ireland does, and has long derived from them, if they are educated without any idea of discipline and obedience, and then put under bishops, who do not owe their station to their good opinion, and whom they cannot respect, that nation will see disorders, of which, bad as things are, it has yet no idea. I do not say this as thinking the leading men in Ireland would exercise this trust worse than others; not at all: No man, *no set of men* living are fit to administer the affairs or regulate the interior œconomy of a church to which they are *enemies*.

As to government, if I might recommend a prudent caution to them,—it would be, to innovate as little as possible, upon speculation, in establishments, from which, as they stand, they experience no material inconvenience to the repose of the country,—*quieta non movere*—I could say a great deal more; but I am tired: and am afraid your Lordship is tired also. I have not sat to this letter a single quarter of an hour without interruption. It has grown long, and probably contains

many repetitions, from my total want of leisure to digest and consolidate my thoughts : and as to my expressions, I could wish to be able perhaps to measure them more exactly. But my intentions are fair, and I certainly mean to offend nobody.

\* \* \* \* \*

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THINKING over this matter more maturely, I see no reason for altering my opinion in any part. The act, as far as it goes, is undoubtedly good. It amounts, I think, very nearly to a toleration with respect to religious ceremonies, but it puts *a new bolt* on civil rights, and *rivets it* to the old one in such a manner, that neither, I fear, will be easily loosened. What I could have wished would be, to see the civil advantages take the lead ; the other, I conceive, would follow as a matter of course.

FROM what I have observed, it is pride, arrogance, a spirit of domination, and not a bigotted spirit of religion, that has caused and kept up those oppressive statutes. I am sure I have known those who have oppressed papists in their civil rights, exceedingly indulgent to them in their religious ceremonies ; and who wished them to continue, in order to furnish pretences for oppression ; and who never saw a man by con-  
forming



forming escape out of their power, but with grudging and regret. I have known men, to whom I am not uncharitable in saying, though they are dead, that they would become papists in order to oppress protestants ; if, being protestants, it was not in their power to oppress papists. It is injustice, and not a mistaken conscience, that has been the principle of persecution, at least as far as it has fallen under my observation. However, as I began, so I end. I do not know the map of the country. Mr. G——r, who conducts this great and difficult work, and those who support him, are better judges of the business than I can pretend to be, who have not set my foot in Ireland, those sixteen years. I have been given to understand, that I am not considered as a friend to that country : and I know that pains have been taken to lessen the credit that I might have had there. \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* I am so convinced of the weakness of interfering in any business without the opinion of the people in whose business I interfere, that I do not know how to acquit myself, of what I have now done.—I have the honour to be, with high regard and esteem,

My Lord,

Your lordship's most obedient,  
and humble servant, &c.

*Charles Street,  
London, &c.*

I am to be convinced of the worth  
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